Minutes of the LAS Faculty Meeting March 7, 2019
3:30 p.m.
Cardinal Room, Student Center East

1. Approval of the Minutes

The minutes of the October 22, 2018 LAS Faculty Meeting were approved.

2. Dean’s Report:

The Dean opened the meeting by noting that the recent wave of positive momentum and good news continues on many fronts for the College. She has been impressed by the high quality of the scholars who have accepted new faculty positions in LAS this past year, as well as the good number of recent successful senior hires. The College plans to significantly grow faculty numbers over the next three years, and the recent searches have been a testament to the high regard in which our College and departments are held.

The Dean further reported that the College is experiencing a significant increase in sponsored research expenditures, with a 9% jump compared to this same point last fiscal year. The Departments of Physics, Psychology, and Mathematics, Statistics, and Computer Science, as well as the Learning Science Research Institute (LSRI) were all recognized for recent increases in their research expenditures. The Dean then listed close to a dozen recent LAS research highlights, including: NSF CAREER Awardees; a million-dollar NASA award; two separate million plus LSRI grants; and several LAS awardees from the U of I Presidential Initiative to Celebrate the Impact of the Arts and Humanities.

The Dean then turned to student matters, noting that while it was too soon to tell, a class size similar to the previous fall was anticipated. She reported that several College efforts are underway in support of student success. The Writing Center is functioning at capacity and has increased its online tutoring support, which now also includes Sunday evenings. The new Math and Science Learning Center, which had opened its doors the previous Fall, had registered nearly 3,000 individual students and 12,000 visits in its first semester. Initial assessments have concluded that
students who seek support at the Center tend to do better in essentially all 100 and 200-level courses, and that the services have an especially positive impact on first-generation students. LAS is also in the process of establishing a “First-at-LAS” program to support the academic success and retention of first-generation students. Faculty members interested in learning more about a Faculty Council supporting this effort were directed to contact Associate Dean Rosie Hernandez.

In respect to the budget, the Dean mentioned the good news that the Illinois Governor is recognizing the need to support higher education and recommending a 5% increase in funding. LAS is currently working with the campus on budget planning for AY 19-20 and more information should be available later in the Spring.

The Dean then recognized current and emeritus faculty who are giving back through both their research and dedication to our students and also through strong financial support. She listed over half-a-dozen faculty and emeritus faculty members who have made major philanthropic gifts to LAS in FY19. The Dean also listed alumni who are giving back in generous ways to departments such as Anthropology, English, Biological Sciences, and the College. She added that LAS has realized 84% of our IGNITE Campaign fundraising goal, raised nine $1M+ gifts, partnered with industry to create the TransUnion Professorship in Data Analytics, and fully funded a $100,000 Scholarship Challenge Match to support LAS students. The 2019 Scholarship and Recognition Luncheon was planned for the next week to celebrate the accomplishments of scholarship recipients and the generosity of scholarship donors.

There were no faculty questions.

3. Report of the Diversity Committee:

The Dean introduced the Diversity Committee report by emphasizing that diversity is at the heart of LAS and that the commitment to providing opportunities for everyone in our community to flourish permeates and informs everything we do. The College has both a Diversity Committee, represented here, and a Diversity Council which includes representatives from every department. The Council serves as a conduit of communication between the units and the College about diversity related policies. The Dean thanked the Committee and provided some information about LAS diversity efforts, for example:
• Last year, 25% of the new faculty hires were underrepresented minorities and 35% were part of the Under-Represented Faculty Recruitment Program on campus
• Currently 51% of academic advising staff self-identify as under-represented minorities
• 47% of LAS undergraduates are from historically under-represented groups

The Dean then turned the floor over to Marya Schechtman who presented the Diversity Committee’s report.

Marya Schechtman reported that the Committee had met twice with additional meetings scheduled. Ten proposals for the Committee’s Diversity seed grant had been received from faculty, students, and staff, representing an increase over last year’s submissions. The Committee held its Fall meeting with the Diversity Council to discuss diversity efforts, successes, and challenges. Vice Provost for Undergraduate Affairs, Nikos Varelas visited this meeting to present on student success. Another meeting was scheduled at which the new Director of the Arab American Cultural Center was to present to the Council. The Committee had also joined an LAS Executive Committee meeting to share information. Separate meetings with the LAS Student Advisory Board and the Dean were planned for the near future.

There was one question about how the Committee evaluated issues and set goals for the future. The Chair responded that the Committee’s charter was to act as a point of contact for the multiple diversity and inclusion issues going on throughout the College and the Campus, and to evaluate what is working, what needs further support, and where there are lacunae. To this end, the committee collects data concerning demographics and diversity initiatives, and meets with the council and other appropriate groups and offices in an effort to collect and transmit information, bring natural partners together, and support and initiate diversity and inclusion initiatives where appropriate.

4. Report of the Executive Committee:

Serdar Ogut, Chair of the LAS Executive Committee, delivered the report. Since the last faculty meeting the Committee considered several faculty matters including: Committee replacements for the Educational Policy Committee and the Executive Committee; nominations for LAS Standing Committees and the UIC Faculty Senate; two off-cycle Promotion & Tenure considerations; candidates for the University Scholar and Excellence in Teaching Awards; as well as two Emeritus requests. In December, the Committee had also deliberated and voted on 18 Promotion and Tenure cases and was currently reviewing seven promotion to Senior Lecturer cases.
As mentioned in the previous report, the Executive Committee had met with members of the LAS Diversity Committee. Additionally, the Committee had received updates on and discussed issues related to: resources for distressed students; a policy on faculty academic leave planning; faculty research profile documents relating to resources and collaborations; DFUW grades and action plans; an LAS Spring checklist for departmental P&T activities, and the College process for receiving departmental faculty hiring requests.

5. **Report of the Educational Policy Committee (EPC):**

After a brief listing of the curricular items in the EPC report, the faculty voted to unbundle the following proposed item and send it back for reconsideration by the Educational Policy Committee:

*College of Liberal Arts and Sciences*

Revision of the LAS Writing-in-the-Discipline Guidelines

Faculty considerations raised in relation to the LAS Writing-in-the-Discipline Guidelines involved providing departments flexibility to apply the guidelines and expand the circle of potential instructors for Writing-in-the-Discipline courses to go beyond Senior Lecturers and potentially also include Lecturers and Visiting faculty members.

The faculty then proceeded to approve the following remaining Educational Policy Committee items:

*Department of African American Studies*

(1) Proposal to Rename the BA in Liberal Arts and Sciences, Major in African American Studies the BA in Liberal Arts and Sciences, Major in Black Studies and Proposal to Rename the Minor in African American Studies the Minor in Black Studies

(2) Proposal to Rename the Department of African American Studies the Department of Black Studies

(3) Proposal to Establish an Interdepartmental Graduate Concentration in Black Studies

(4) Proposal to Establish the Black Studies (BLST) Course Subject and Eliminate the African American (AAST) Course Subject

*Department of Anthropology*

Proposal to Revise the B.A. in Liberal Arts and Sciences, Major in Anthropology
Departments of Biological Sciences and Psychology
(1) Proposal to Revise the Major in Integrated Health Studies
(2) Proposal to Revise the BS in Neuroscience

Department of Economics
(1) Proposal to Eliminate of the Minor in Human Capital and Labor Markets
(2) Proposal to Eliminate the Undergraduate Certificate in the Teaching of Economics

Department of Germanic Studies
Proposal to Revise Admission Requirements for the MA and PhD in Germanic Studies

Department of Mathematics, Statistics, and Computer Science
Proposal to Establish the Minor in Statistics

Department of Psychology
Proposal to Revise the Major in Psychology

Department of Polish, Russian, and Lithuanian Studies (formerly, the Department of Slavic and Baltic Languages and Literatures)
(1) Proposal to Establish the Certificate in Polish Language
(2) Proposal to Establish the Certificate in Russian Language

Department of Sociology
Proposal to Revise the Major in Sociology

For Information Only
Program in Latin American and Latino Studies
Proposal to make the Interdepartmental Graduate concentration in Latin American and Latino Studies available to student in the MA and PhD programs in Art History; Criminology, Law, and Justice; Economics; Philosophy; and Psychology
6. Remarks from Provost Susan Poser:

Provost Susan Poser opened by saying that she was happy to join this meeting and provided updates on the following areas:

1. John Marshall Law School merger is proceeding through all of the levels of review and approval
2. Candidates for the Executive Director for the Center for Teaching Excellence are visiting campus
3. The search for the new Dean of the College of Architecture, Design, and the Arts is also progressing
4. The General Education Brainstorming Committee is up and running and includes several LAS faculty members. A narrative report should be forthcoming soon.
5. Union negotiations have included mediation and hope was expressed that they would wrap-up soon
6. The Provost identified the need to figure out better student retention strategies. She noted some known areas of concern such as 1) the financial need of students, 2) the need for better communication from student affairs, and 3) high DFW rates.

The Provost opened the floor to faculty questions.

- The difficult tension between supporting faculty research, involving students in faculty research, and balancing faculty teaching loads was raised. The Provost noted that most higher education institutions similar to UIC in terms of student demographics are not also Research I institutions. There was a request for conversations around issues relating to supporting and balancing student teaching with faculty research success, and ways to support research efforts so that students can be included in research activities and leave with research skills. It was also noted that flexibility is required, in that UIC has experienced great student enrollments, however, the faculty numbers have not kept pace.

- A question was raised about the opening of the new Center for Teaching Excellence and the role that faculty engagement in professional development teaching activities might play in future campus promotion and tenure considerations. It was noted that departments and colleges, if they so wish, can
revise their norms at any point in regards to teaching expectations for promotion and tenure.

- Questions were also raised around the possibility of a graduate student strike. The Provost noted that negotiations were still underway and that there was hope a strike would be averted. She relayed that there were both economic and non-economic issues on the table and discussed some of the areas where the two sides still had room to negotiate. The need to balance sustainable campus priorities with the potential outcomes of the negotiations for both students and the College was briefly mentioned.

- Curricular items related to issues such as DFW rates and absenteeism were raised in response to the Provost’s earlier remarks. The question of incorporating instruction on ‘how to be a student’ and moves toward shrinking class sizes were discussed. It was noted that additional money is not readily available, however, efforts are underway to think about general education more broadly and determine what skills, experiences, knowledge, etc. UIC students should have when they graduate.

- The last item discussed was the budget. It was noted that both enrollment numbers and campus needs are growing, requiring additional campus resources. The Provost noted that the Chancellor and others are constantly making the case for additional State and outside support.

7. Announcements

The Dean announced that her Spring semester Office Hours would be on March 20th from 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. on the 4th floor of UH. All faculty members were encouraged to come if they have items to discuss. Faculty were invited to attend the April 6th Ignite Admitted Student Day and meet with perspective students and their families. Faculty were also invited to celebrate at the Spring Commencement ceremony on May 12th at the Credit Union 1 Arena.

8. Old Business

The Dean was delighted to honor Nadine Naber with the LAS Service Award, as Professor Naber had been unable to attend the October 22, 2018 meeting where both she
and Professor David Marker were announced as the honorees. Professor Naber joined the Dean at the podium to receive her award and to be recognized for her exceptional service.

9. **New Business**

   There was no new business

10. **Adjournment at 4:55 pm.**

   Respectfully submitted,

   Rebecca Lind  
   LAS Faculty Secretary